

APPROVED FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Montgomery County Community Action Board
Zoom Meeting
January 24, 2023

MINUTES

CAB Members in Attendance: Elaine Carballo, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Erika Conner, Denise Fredericks, Jeffery Johnson, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Evelyn Okutu, Lisette Orellana Engel, Myriam Paul, Timothy Robinson, Claudia Simmons, and Mike Subin

CAB Members Absent: Pamela Lockett and Zelda Wafer-Jones

CAA Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, and Leah Goldfine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm.

Consent Agenda

Mike moved to approve the consent agenda. Lisette seconded the motion and all voted in favor. The consent agenda included the November 29, 2022 meeting minutes and evaluations summary; Executive Director’s Report; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison’s Report; Budget update; FY21 CSBG Financial Status Report; FY21 CSBG CARES Act Financial Status Report; CAB Board of Education Testimony; CAB Testimony: HB 87 – SNAP Waiver for Diapers and Menstrual Hygiene Products; CSBG Organizational Standards Report; and the Community Needs Assessment Draft.

CAB Updates

CAB members received the agency’s CSBG Organizational Standards Report prior to the meeting. Aizat described the nine categories and explained how the report was developed. Leah provided an overview of the standards that pertain to the CAB’s work specifically in Category 5. Timothy moved to approve the CSBG Organizational Standards report and Evelyn seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Board members received the draft Community Needs Assessment prior to the meeting. Mike moved to approve the report and Timothy seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The CNA would be formatted by a graphic artist and shared with the public after it is finalized.

Staff provided an overview of the discussion which took place at the EC meeting about renters insurance. Community Action staff assisting with recent fires and explosions have noted that renters insurance makes a significant difference for people and those with insurance have much better outcomes. This may be an opportunity for future advocacy for the CAB. Board members were also informed of County Council Bill 33-22, which aims to require affordable housing feasibility studies sooner in the planning process. In an effort to review these issues more in-depth, the CAB decided to

establish an Affordable Housing Ad-Hoc Committee. Myriam, Mike, Lisette, Erika, and Denise volunteered to serve on the committee.

Executive Director's Report

Board members received a detailed Executive Director's written report with updates on the agency's programs, along with written updates on the agency's budget. Sharon noted that the new Program Manager overseeing the navigation program started. Interviews for the three Navigator positions already took place and the agency hopes to have those positions filled soon. Brokers' contracts were extended through March to address any lapse in service. Brokers have been placed at partner sites to provide navigation services in different areas. Sharon reported that there are eleven families in the Opportunity Coaching pilot program, which is funded through October.

Sharon reported that the VITA Partnership hosted an excellent event on January 20 in celebration of EITC Awareness Day and a story about VITA would air that night on Univision. The head of the IRS Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) was scheduled to visit the agency's VITA site at WorkSource Montgomery that week. Board members were reminded of the VITA appointments schedule this tax season. Sharon noted that the agency lost United Way funding received in previous years to support outreach and a VITA Fellow. CASH Campaign of MD may be able to provide some funding to support the texting campaign this year.

Sharon referred to the detailed fiscal report and noted that the agency closed out the CARES Act grant and is working to spend down the current grant.

Head Start

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the Head Start program. Charlene shared updates on the situation regarding the PreK class at Watkins Mill High School. The school had made some adjustments to address concerns, including adding breakroom space and access to additional bathrooms for students. The class would be moved to a different location the following school year.

The agency submitted a carryover request to spend \$820,000 in Head Start funds next year. CAB members were notified that they would receive a CAB Head Start survey, which would be used as part of the Self-Assessment. Charlene noted that the program would have a finding soon regarding the child who eloped from the Summit Hall Elementary School Head Start program earlier this school year.

Contracts

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract partners. Aizat noted that the County Council Resolution providing additional funding for Manna Food Center's Farm to Food Bank contract has not been signed by the Council yet. The funding was part of County Council's special appropriation for food insecurity. It is an addition to Manna's original funding to provide grants for Farmers to enhance their produce yield and needs to be included to the DHHS FY23 Budget in order for it to be added to the Manna contract. Aizat is working with the budget team on other additional funds for Manna's FY24 funding. Aizat reported that monitoring visits and contract reviews have begun.

Open Forum/Announcements

Erika informed the CAB that she oversees the HOC newsletter and would like board members to send her announcements and information that would be of interest to HOC residents.

Lisa shared that Head Start/PreK applications are now paperless and registration for the next school year will begin on March 1. For those without access to a computer, staff will be assisting with applications at several satellite sites across the county, in addition to the main office at Rocking Horse Road Center.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7 pm.